

Special Inspection General Guidelines

A. Purpose of Special Inspection

Special inspection is the monitoring of the materials and workmanship that are critical to the integrity of the building structure. It is the review of the work of the contractors and their employees to ensure that the approved plans and specifications are being followed and that relevant codes and ordinances are being observed. The special inspection process is in addition to those conducted by the municipal building inspector and by the engineer or architect of record as part of periodic structural observation. Special inspectors furnish continuous or periodic inspection as prescribed in CBC Table 1704.3 for that construction which requires their presence (CBC Sections 110.3.9 and 1704).

Good communication between the special inspector and the designers, contractor and building department is essential to project quality assurance. The following sections, B through F, are a combination of successful completion of buildings.

B. Duties and Responsibilities of the Special Inspector

The building code requires that a "Statement of Special Inspection" be submitted with the application of the permit. The special inspector should know and understand the scope of the statement prior to beginning special inspections (see the duties of the design professional in responsible charge).

Special inspectors and/or inspection agencies must document acceptance of their responsibilities and scope of work for a project by signing the Special Inspection and Testing Agreement and the Special Inspection and Testing Schedule.

Duties of special inspectors and/or inspection agencies include the following:

- 1. General requirements.** Special inspectors shall review approved plans and specifications for special inspections requirements of the enforcing jurisdiction found in the Statement of Special Inspections including work and materials.
- 2. Signify presence at jobsite.** Special inspectors shall notify contractor personnel of their presence and responsibilities at the jobsite. They shall sign in on the appropriate form posted with the building permit.
- 3. Observe assigned work.** Special inspectors shall inspect all work according to the Statement of Special Inspections for which they are responsible for conformance with the building department approved (stamped) plans and specifications and applicable provisions of CBC Section 1704.
- 4. Report nonconforming items (discrepancies).** Special inspectors shall bring all nonconforming items to the immediate attention of the contractor. If any such item is not

resolved in a timely manner or is soon to be incorporated into the work, the engineer or architect of record and the building official shall be notified immediately and the item noted in the special inspector's written report (Section 1704.1.2). Palmdale requires the report to be a separate, individual report from the progress reports. The building official requires this report to be posted in a conspicuous place on the job site. The special inspector shall include in the report, as a minimum, the following information about each nonconforming item:

- Description and exact location.
- Reference to applicable detail of approved plans/specifications.
- Name and title of each individual notified and method of notification.
- Resolution or corrective action taken.

5. **Provide timely progress reports.** The special inspector shall complete written inspection reports for each inspection visit and provide the reports on a timely basis. The special inspector or inspection agency shall furnish these reports directly to the building official and to the design professional in charge (Section 1704.1.2). These reports shall be organized on a daily format and may be submitted weekly at the option of the building official. In these reports, special inspections shall:

- Describe inspections and tests made with applicable locations and whether the work meets the requirements of the statement of special inspections.
- Indicate nonconforming items (discrepancies) and how they were resolved.
- List unresolved items, parties notified, and time and method of notification.
- Itemize changes authorized by engineer or architect of record if not included in nonconforming items.

6. **Submit final report.** Special inspectors and inspection agencies shall submit a final signed report to the building department stating that all items requiring special inspection and testing by the Statement of Special Inspection were fulfilled and reported and, to the best of their knowledge in also required the design professional in responsible charge to sign the report before it is submitted to the building official. Items not in conformance, unresolved items or any discrepancies in inspection coverage (i.e., missed inspections, periodic inspection when continuous was required, etc.) shall be specifically itemized in this report.

C. Duties and Responsibilities of the Project Owner

The project owner, the engineer or architect of record, are responsible for funding special inspections services. Measures should be taken to ensure that the scope of work and duties of the special inspector as outlined in the Statement of Special Inspection are not compromised. The contractor may not fund the special inspector or inspection agency.

D. Duties and Responsibilities of the Design Professional in Responsible Charge

The design professional in responsible charge shall be a consenting party by written acknowledgment of special inspection and testing agreements.

The design professional in responsible charge shall prepare a "Statement of Special Inspections" to be submitted with the permit application (Sections 105.3 and 1704.1.1). The content of the statement is to contain the following information (Section 1705.2). Also see City of Palmdale Special Inspection Agreement for details.

1. Materials, systems, components and work required to have special inspection. Duties of the building official and the registered professional responsible for each part of the work are to be stated.
2. Type and extent of each special inspection and the name of individual or firms performing the inspections.
3. Type and extent of each test.
4. Special inspection of required seismic resistance systems and components (Section 1705.3).
5. Special inspection of required wind resistance systems and components (Section 1705.4).
6. Requirements for structural observation. See Sections 107.3.4 and 1710 for information regarding specific requirements.

The following are elements of good practice and must be included in the statement of special inspections.

7. Provide name and contact information of special inspector or special inspection agency. Subject to the approval of the building official, special inspectors holding current certification by ICC in the discipline in which they will be inspecting can be considered qualified. Likewise, special inspection agencies holding current accreditation with IAS with the appropriate scope of accreditation for the disciplines to be inspected can be considered qualified. The choice of special inspectors or special inspection agencies should include the following considerations:
 - Project size and complexity – experience with similar projects.
 - Inspection staffing – sufficient qualified inspectors.
 - Site location – proximity of inspection and testing facilities.
 - Offsite inspection – capabilities for inspection at remote locations.
8. Completion of a special inspection and testing agreement and schedule.
9. Respond to field discrepancies. The engineer or architect of record shall respond to special inspector reports of uncorrected noncomplying (discrepancies) items and shall approve remedial measures.
10. Review shop drawings and submit revisions to approved plans. The design professional in responsible charge shall acknowledge and approve shop drawings that may detail structural information. The design professional shall submit to the building official and the special inspector/inspection agency written approval of any deviations from the approved

plans and shall submit revised plans for building official approval (Section 107.3.4). The City of Palmdale requires the signature of the design professional on all final documents.

It is required that the design professional in responsible charge be a signatory of the statement of special inspection and of any subsequent agreements affecting the work of special inspection of the project.

E. Duties and Responsibilities of the Contractor

Each contractor responsible for construction of the structural systems described in Section 1709 shall submit a written statement of responsibility to the building official and the owner prior to commencement of the work on the system or component. The contractor's statement of responsibility is to contain the following:

1. Acknowledgement of awareness of the special requirements contained in the statement of special inspections;
2. Acknowledgement that control will be exercised to obtain conformance with the construction documents approved by the building official;
3. Procedures for exercising control within the contractor's organization, the method and frequency of reporting and the distribution of the reports; and
4. Identification and qualifications of the person(s) exercising such control and their positions(s) in the organization.

In addition to the responsibilities mentioned by code, the contractor should:

5. Notify the special inspector. Adequate notice shall be provided so that the special inspector has time to become familiar with the project.
6. Provide access to approved plans. The contractor is responsible for providing the special inspector with access to approved plans (CBC Section 107.3.1).
7. Retain special inspection records. The contractor is responsible for retaining at the job-site all special inspection records submitted by the special inspector and providing these records for review by the building department's inspector upon request.

F. Duties and Responsibilities of the Building Official

Of all the team members involved in the construction process, the building official is the only one with the legal authority to enforce the special inspection provisions of the code (Section 104.4). The employment of a special inspector or agency shall not relieve the building department of responsibility for special inspections or structural observations as required by the code and stated in the Statement of Special Inspections. Building department inspections of items also requiring special inspection should not be signed off without the concurrence of the special inspector.

The specific duties and responsibilities of the building official relating to special inspection include the following:

1. Review submittal documents for compliance with special inspection requirements. The building official is charged with the legal authority to review the plans, specifications pertaining to work and materials, special inspection program and other submittal documents for compliance with code requirements (Sections 104.2 and 105). Approval for materials should in accordance with Sections 104.9 and 104.11.
2. Approve Fabricator(s) used for building components installed on-site.
3. Approve special inspection program. The building official is responsible for approving the special inspection program submitted by the design professional in responsible charge (Section 107.1) and a preconstruction conference to review the program with all applicable members of the construction team is required.
4. Approve special inspectors/inspection agencies. The building official is responsible for determining competence of special inspectors for the types of work they will be inspecting (Section 1704).
5. Monitor special inspection activities. The building official should monitor the special inspection activities at the job-site to assure that qualified special inspectors are performing their duties when work requiring special inspection is in process (Section 1704.1.2).
6. Issuance of stop work orders. The building official is recognized as having the authority to stop work at the job-site (Section 114), however, the special inspector does not have this authority. Stop work orders most likely will be issued in response to a discrepancy report that has been written.
7. Approval to proceed. There are certain points of completion where work shall not proceed until approval by the building official has been given.
8. Review inspection reports. The building official receives and reviews special inspection progress reports and final reports for conformance with the approved plans, specifications and workmanship provisions of the code (Section 1704.1.2).
9. The building official will not issue certificate of occupancy for a project (CBC Section 111.2) until the final inspection report has been reviewed and approved.